
Current Conditions: Presence or Absence of Wilderness Characteristics
Area Unique Identifier: CO-S05000-004 Roc Creek

Acreage: 7,650

(1) Is the area of sufficient size? (If the area meets one of the exceptions to the size criterion, check "Yes" and describe the exception in the space provided below),

Yes X No

Description (describe the boundaries of the area--wilderness inventory roads, property lines, etc.):

This unit is near, but not contiguous with, Sewemup Mesa WSA.

Unit is bounded as follows:

- on the east and northeast by private land and the Dolores River;
- on the north by private land, US Forest Service land, and Roc Creek Road;
- on the southwest, south and southeast by Montrose County Road Q13.

(2) Does the area appear to be natural?

Yes X No N/A

Description (include land ownership, location, topography, vegetation, and summary of major human uses/activities):

Of the original 7,650 acres inventoried, 5,480 acres are natural in appearance. The southeast part of the inventory unit in the upper Beehive Canyon/Carpenter Flats area contains many vehicle routes and linear disturbances remaining from past mineral exploration. That part of the unit is not natural in appearance to a casual observer.

Within the remaining natural-appearing part of the unit there is an old vehicle route that enters from the southwest boundary, off of Montrose County Road S8, and continues in a northeast direction. The route shows signs of mechanical construction, but has been abandoned and unused for a number of years. Trees and brush are growing in the former route. Because it is neither used nor maintained, it does not meet the definition of "road" as defined for the purpose of this wilderness characteristics inventory. It is still quite noticeable to an observer walking along its route, but it is substantially unnoticeable from almost any other vantage point, and does not detract from the naturalness of the unit as a whole.

The south and southwest boundary of the remaining (natural appearing) acres of the unit is defined by Montrose County Road Q13 and several road spurs that have been "cherry-stemmed" out of the unit. While the lands inside the boundary appear to be natural, an observer has the

feeling of being around several noticeable roads, especially when in the vicinity of the cherry-stems.

The main part of the unit is comprised primarily of steep terrain, draining toward the north into Roc Creek. Vegetation is predominantly pinyon-juniper forest.

(3) Does the area (or the remainder of the area if a portion has been excluded due to unnaturalness and the remainder is of sufficient size) have outstanding opportunities for solitude?

Yes X No N/A

Description:

The unit is comprised primarily of rugged, steep topography and dense pinyon-juniper forest. Both the topography and vegetation provide excellent screening for an enhanced sense of solitude. It is also far from populated areas and receives very light recreational use. The unit is more than 90 road-miles from Moab, Grand Junction and Montrose. These factors combine to provide outstanding opportunities for solitude in the unit.

(4) Does the area (or the remainder of the area if a portion has been excluded due to unnaturalness and the remainder is of sufficient size) have outstanding opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation?

Yes X No N/A

Description (describe the area's outstanding opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation):

The unit is only accessible by foot or on horseback, and has no recreational facilities.

The forested ridges and slopes leading into deep and rocky canyons form a landscape that is outstandingly suited to primitive and unconfined recreational activities, especially for those seeking self-directed and challenging hiking, backpacking, or horseback riding.

(5) Does the area have supplemental values (ecological, geological, or other features of scientific, educational, scenic or historical value)?

Yes X No N/A

Description:

The unit has highly scenic views from the bluffs overlooking the deep drainages within the unit.

Summary of Analysis*

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Summary

Results of analysis:

The original proposal from the Colorado Wilderness Network included Sewemup Mesa WSA and BLM lands in both Grand Junction and Uncompahgre field offices, as well as US Forest service lands in the Roc Creek vicinity. This inventory focuses on BLM lands outside of existing WSAs and designated wilderness, all within the Uncompahgre Field Office planning area.

The proposal within the Uncompahgre Field Office, exclusive of WSA acres comes to 7,650 acres of BLM lands. The adjacent US Forest Service lands were not considered because they are not administratively endorsed for wilderness protection.

250 acres on the west side of the remaining proposal were dropped because they were non-contiguous with the remainder of the unit.

An additional 2,170 acres around Beehive Canyon and the southern and eastern part of Carpenter Flats were dropped from consideration because they lack naturalness. Numerous vehicle routes create a network of unnatural disturbances in those areas. Montrose County Road R12 forms part of the boundary of the remaining Roc Creek wilderness characteristics unit.

The remaining unit is 5,480 acres in size.

1. Does the area meet any of the size requirements? ☒ Yes ☐ No

2. Does the area appear to be natural?

☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A

3. Does the area offer outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation?

☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A

4. Does the area have supplemental values? ☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A

Check one:

☒ The area, or a portion of the area, has wilderness characteristics and is identified as lands with wilderness characteristics.

☐ The area does not have wilderness characteristics.

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4-3-15
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* This form documents information that constitutes an inventory finding on wilderness characteristics. It does not represent a formal land use allocation or a final agency decision subject to administrative remedies under either 43 CFR parts 4 or 1610.5-3.